

Maryland Historical Trust

State Historic Sites Inventory Form

1. Name (indicate preferred name)

historic (New) Sharptown School

and/or common (New) Sharptown School; Hall of Thomas H. Kiah, #101 F. & A.M. Lodge

2. Location

street & number East side Sharptown-Skinners Neck Road, .5 mile south of CR 20
Route 20, east of Rock Hall not for publication

city, town Rock Hall X vicinity of congressional district first

state Maryland 21661 county Kent

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<u>X</u> district	<u> </u> public	<u>X</u> occupied	<u> </u> agriculture <u> </u> museum
<u> </u> building(s)	<u>X</u> private	<u> </u> unoccupied	<u> </u> commercial <u> </u> park
<u> </u> structure	<u> </u> both	<u> </u> work in progress	<u> </u> educational <u> </u> private residence
<u> </u> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<u> </u> entertainment <u> </u> religious
<u> </u> object	<u> </u> in process	<u> </u> yes: restricted	<u> </u> government <u> </u> scientific
	<u> </u> being considered	<u> </u> yes: unrestricted	<u> </u> industrial <u> </u> transportation
	<u>X</u> not applicable	<u>X</u> no	<u> </u> military <u>X</u> other: lodge hall

4. Owner of Property (give names and mailing addresses of all owners)

name Thomas H. Kiah, #101 F. & A.M. Lodge (Masonic)

street & number telephone no.: None

city, town Rock Hall state and zip code Maryland 21661

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Kent County Court House liber EHP 19

street & number folio 295

city, town Chestertown state Maryland 21620

6. Representation in Existing Historical Surveys NONE

title

date federal state county local

depository for survey records

city, town state

7. Description

Survey No. K-513

Condition

☐ excellent

☐ good

☒ fair

☐ deteriorated

☐ ruins

☐ unexposed

Check one

☐ unaltered

☒ altered

Check one

☒ original site

☐ moved

date of move

Prepare both a summary paragraph and a general description of the resource and its various elements as it exists today.

A one-story, gable-roofed, frame, circa 1927 schoolhouse originally weatherboarded but later shingled, the original, main section measures about 24 feet by 72 feet with two large classrooms (divided by a folding wall) occupying the central 5/6 of the space. At each end are vestibules and support facilities. There are four entries. Two groups of six tall, double-hung windows on the west side and a row of high awning windows on the east side provided the light and ventilation required of Rosenwald Fund schools.

8. Significance

Survey No. K-513

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400–1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500–1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600–1699	<input type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700–1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800–1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900–	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates	1927	Builder/Architect
check: Applicable Criteria:	<input type="checkbox"/> A <input type="checkbox"/> B <input type="checkbox"/> C <input type="checkbox"/> D	
and/or		
Applicable Exception:	<input type="checkbox"/> A <input type="checkbox"/> B <input type="checkbox"/> C <input type="checkbox"/> D <input type="checkbox"/> E <input type="checkbox"/> F <input type="checkbox"/> G	
Level of Significance:	<input type="checkbox"/> national <input type="checkbox"/> state <input type="checkbox"/> local	

Prepare both a summary paragraph of significance and a general statement of history and support.

In the 1920's this elementary school succeeded the old Sharptown School (K-512) as the educational center and a social center for Rock Hall-area blacks. It is one of only two black schools in Kent County (the other was the Coleman School, K-505) built with the help of Rosenwald Fund money and at least to Rosenwald Fund specifications for school design, if not from a Rosenwald Fund plan itself. These schools, with their emphasis on spaciousness, light and ventilation, are a marked contrast to the other Kent County elementary schools for black children, which (with the exception of Garnett School in Chestertown) were minimal one-room facilities. The new Sharptown School was last used for a school in 1966, near the end of segregated schooling in Kent County.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Survey No. K-513

Edwin R. Embree and Julia Waxman. Investment in People: The Story of the Julius Rosenwald Fund. New York: Harper & Brothers, 1949.

M.R. Warner. Julius Rosenwald: The Life of a Practical Humanitarian. New York: Harper & Brothers, 1939.

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property _____

Quadrangle name _____

Quadrangle scale _____

UTM References do NOT complete UTM references

A

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

Zone Easting Northing

B

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

Zone Easting Northing

C

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

D

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

E

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

F

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

G

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

H

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

Verbal boundary description and justification

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	code	county	code
-------	------	--------	------

state	code	county	code
-------	------	--------	------

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Margaret Q. Fallaw, Surveyor

organization County Commissioners of Kent County
Historical Society of Kent County

date October 1, 1982

street & number The Court House
Church Alley

telephone 778-4600
778-3499

city or town Chestertown

state Maryland 21620

The Maryland Historic Sites Inventory was officially created by an Act of the Maryland Legislature to be found in the Annotated Code of Maryland, Article 41, Section 181 KA, 1974 supplement.

The survey and inventory are being prepared for information and record purposes only and do not constitute any infringement of individual property rights.

return to: Maryland Historical Trust
Shaw House
21 State Circle
Annapolis, Maryland 21401
(301) 269-2438

CONTINUATION SHEET

7.1 DESCRIPTION (continued)

BUILDING FORM AND MATERIAL

1. Size

Main Section: tall 1 story, 4 bays wide, 2 bays deep. Measurements: ca. 24'-6" x 72'-0". This is the original building, built ca. 1927.

Wing: 1 story, 2 bays wide, 1 bay deep. Measurements: ca. 10'-0" x 18'-6".

2. Plan type: two large classrooms divided by folding wall; kitchen and vestibule are at north gable end; vestibule and lavatories are at south gable end.

3. Roof type: main section- gable; wing-shed

4. Chimney(s): two are located along the long, east wall, near each gable end. These were for stoves, one per classroom. The third, later chimney is in the middle of the east side of the wing, for furnace. The original stove chimneys are of brick, the later furnace chimney of concrete block. The original chimneys have brick caps.

5. Material/Walls

Main Section: Frame. Wood shingles with 13-14" exposure over ca. 6" exposure horizontal weatherboarding.

Wing: Frame. Half concrete block, half wood shingles.

6. Material/Roofs: Asphalt shingles throughout.

7. Material/Foundation

Main Section: concrete block piers with board infill in some areas.

Wing: continuous concrete block

8. Age:

Main Section: built ca. 1927. Deed of sale of property to school was December 15, 1926 (RRA 8/320).

Wing: ca. 1954 for furnace room and storage

9. Style

Simple rural schoolhouse, although much larger and more sophisticated than earlier Kent County schools for blacks. It is not known whether this school was built from a Rosenwald Fund plan and specifications or whether the plan was from another source and simply met Rosenwald Fund requirements. The apparent late date of this school within the building program of the Rosenwald Fund suggests that the plan and specifications came from the Fund itself. See "The Rosenwald Fund and Education for Blacks" under No. 8, Significance.

CONTINUATION SHEET

7.2 DESCRIPTION (continued)

BUILDING ELEMENTS AND DETAILS

1. Doors:

There are four entries into the main section. On the approach (west) side, at each corner, are the main entries to each classroom, though first into a vestibule. They have plain trim, doors with 5 recessed panels. A small gable-roofed canopy is over each door with simple triangular bracing (brackets) to wall. Wooden steps, railings, and platform are at south end door; there are wooden steps only at north door.

Secondary entries: 1) south gable end, east corner of main section, into cloakroom; 2) long east wall at north corner, into kitchen; 3) ground level door into wing.

2. Windows

Main section: Large, tall double-hung windows with 9/9 lights, arranged in two groups of 6 each on approach side, in group of 3 on each end. 9-light awning windows set high in east wall (rear). Wooden sills, plain trim. No shutters.

Wing: Double-hung, 6/6 lights; 1/1 awning. No shutters.

3. Dormers: none

4. Roof details:

main section: open eaves, with shaped rafter ends; end rafters serve as verge boards; overhang is ca. 18"; narrow tongue-and-groove beaded board visible above rafters (roof decking).

Wing: open eaves

5. Porches: See "doors" above.

6. Color

Current: grey, weathered shingles, red painted piers and skirting, green roof shingles.

Historic: weatherboard painted light buff

INTERIOR DESCRIPTION

1. Plan type: two large classrooms divided by folding-door wall; kitchen and vestibule at north gable end, vestibule and lavatories at south gable end. Kitchen and washrooms originally cloakrooms, or for storage? Kitchen use definitely established later in north end. Indoor plumbing postdated construction. A former teacher states that the folding wall was opened for school programs. Noise transmission would seem to have been a problem when two classes were in session.

2. Stairs: none

3. Mantels: none

CONTINUATION SHEET

7.3 DESCRIPTION (continued)

4. Major trim: Window and door trim is plain. Kitchen chair rail-plain shelf and apron with narrow beaded-board wainscoting below.
5. Major doors: 5 horizontal panels
6. Floors: rubber tile
7. Walls/Ceiling Finishes: plastered and painted above kitchen wainscoting. The former classrooms now have 4x8' sheet paneling (applied by the lodge), painted plaster above 8 foot height. Ceilings are painted plaster. The kitchen interior finish probably is indicative of what was original to the building throughout. The classrooms would have had slate chalkboards on much or all of the walls above the chair rail.

OUTBUILDINGS/SITE DESCRIPTION

1. Outbuildings: small shed-roofed shed at south property line, wood-shingled walls.
2. Site Description: The school is sited about 50 feet from the public road with long dimensions parallel to the road. The 2-acre property is flat. A wire fence with a row of spaced trees just inside it separates the road ditch from the school's front lawn, where there are a metal flagpole and now-neglected shrub plantings. A large grassy rectangular play field surrounded by trees is to the rear; it is said to have been encroached upon by trees since the 1960's. A gravel drive and parking area are to the south.
3. Views to/from site: On same side of road, to south-cornfield beyond trees and brush at property border; to west across road-four late 19th/early 20th century houses and 3 trailers of the Sharptown community, with trees beyond; to north-trees, beyond which the Harris Smith House (K-515) is visible.

USE OF BUILDING

1. Current: lodge hall
2. Historic: school for black children

HISTORY

(Main informant: Ms. Phyllis Walley, Washington Park, Chestertown, Md. 21620, tel. 778-3558; former teacher at Sharptown School, from 1930's to closing in June 1966)

The old Sharptown School (K-512), even with the use of the rear wing of the Mt. Hope Lodge Hall (K-511), having become too small for the many children in attendance during the first quarter of the 20th century, was replaced by this new school, financed jointly by the county, the Julius Rosenwald Fund, and the local community (see also later discussion of Rosenwald Fund). The school served black children from Sharptown, Skinners Neck, Grays Inn, Deep Landing/Biscuit Hill,

CONTINUATION SHEET

7.4 DESCRIPTION (continued)

Piney Neck and Edesville (after the Edesville School closed in the early 1940's). In its early years the school comprised the first seven grades and later the first six (three grades per classroom), with the seventh-graders attending Garnett School in Chestertown.

Like the old Sharptown School, this one also saw its enrollment rise and fall seasonally, with peak attendance of more than 80, as migrant workers' children, who lived in the shanties provided by the oyster house operators of Piney Neck and Deep Landing came at the start of the oyster season in the fall (mainly from the lower Shore) and left before school was out in the spring. Though the school had been built largely to relieve overcrowding, 80 children in this school seemingly was more than the school was intended to serve.

The Coleman School (K-505) for black children was the only other Rosenwald school in Kent County. Its plan was identical to this one until the Still Pond school was closed and a third room (rear wing) had to be added to the Coleman School to accommodate the Still Pond area children.

The school was closed in June 1966 with the start of school integration in Kent County.

For many years the two teachers for the school lived in the concrete-block house across the road from the school; the house was owned by the Board of Education.

8.1 DESCRIPTION (continued)

THE ROSENWALD FUND AND EDUCATION FOR BLACKS

During the 1890's Julius Rosenwald became a part-owner of the mail-order firm of Sears, Roebuck & Company; he made it into the pre-eminent business of its type and himself a multi-millionaire at the same time. One of the best-known philanthropists of his time, he gave 60 to 70 million dollars for various causes. Almost 4.5 million dollars was to further the education of blacks, primarily in the southern states.

His interest in black education apparently dated from his meeting with Booker T. Washington in 1911, and by 1915 he had helped to finance the building of 80 rural schoolhouses in three states. Rosenwald had strong convictions about the use of charitable funds. He felt that the generation which contributed to the making of wealth should be the one to profit by it. He disliked the concept of perpetual trusts and favored using philanthropic funds, both capital and interest, while the needs were more apparent and ideas and enthusiasm were fresh and vigorous. Therefore, the Julius Rosenwald Fund, which he established in 1917 to advance education for blacks, was required to expand both principal and interest within 25 years of his death. In fact, the building program of the fund officially ended in 1932, though the southern office of the fund continued with other activities (such as giving fellowships to promising blacks to attend college and aiding hospitals and health agencies for blacks) until its closing in 1937. The Fund itself was ended in 1948.

Another of Rosenwald's philanthropic tenets was that private money should stimulate public agencies to take a larger share of social responsibility. He also felt that the recipients of his largesse should participate in funding of projects, either by contributing labor or by raising money themselves. In the case of schools, a common effort by the state, county, and local black and white citizens was required. Most commonly, the state and county had to contribute to the building and agree to maintain it as a regular part of the public-school system. White citizens were to take an interest and contribute part of the money since it was felt that white leadership was essential to the success of such a program in the South. Often the land for the school was deeded to the school governing body as the gift of a local white person. The recipient blacks had to contribute money or labor or both. In the case of the Sharptown School, it is not known how these principles were applied since the surveyor could find no one who could remember much about the establishment of the school or who actually participated in it. It is a matter of record, however, that one month before the sale of the property to the Board of Education by William H. Sisco and his wife, Ida (Kent County Land Records, RRA 8/320, Dec. 15, 1926), it was bought by the Siscos from a John Huber and others (RRA 8/202, Nov. 16, 1926). Ida Sisco was a trustee of Aaron Chapel and a community leader; her husband's station in the community is not now known. Rosenwald Fund documents, if preserved in an archive, could shed light on the Fund's relationship to the two Kent County schools it helped fund. Unfortunately, the Kent County Board of Education seems to have lost or discarded most of its old records.

The Fund's school building program (mostly elementary schools) was first handled by the Tuskegee Institute, but in 1920, by which time the program had become too much for the Institute to handle, the main office of the Rosenwald Fund in Chicago established a branch office in Nashville, Tennessee. Although before 1920 the Fund would only build schools which met its standards for size, ventilation, light, etc., after

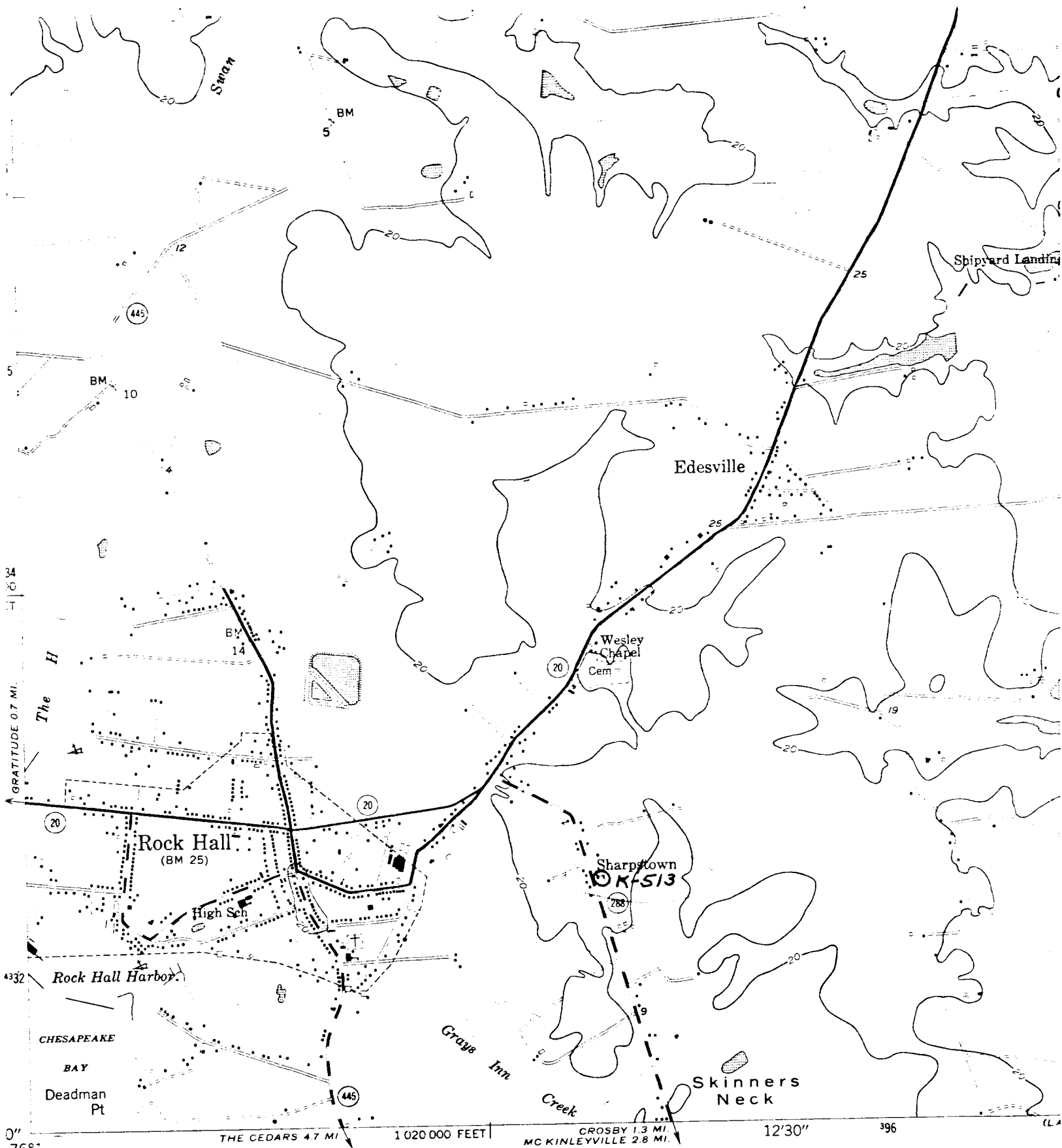
1920, when S.L. Smith became director of the southern office, the standards became more stringent. Larger and more uniform schoolhouses were required. Standard plans were drawn by the Fund from which local school authorities could choose according to their needs. This may explain the similarity of the Sharptown School and the Coleman School in Kent County, which are essentially the same building although a rear wing was later added to the Coleman School after the Still Pond School was closed. Schools built with the assistance of the Rosenwald Fund were plain and simple but considered advanced design for rural schools of their time. Throughout the 1920's new plans were adopted and old ones revised, and the Fund helped to establish at Peabody College (Nashville) the Interstate School Building Service (also later supported by the General Education Board) which supplied plans and specifications for a variety of school buildings and provided information on related concerns such as landscaping, rehabilitation of old buildings, playground design, etc.

During the 1920's the Fund added to its previous requirements the stipulation that help would be given only where the school term for blacks was guaranteed to be at least five months. It would aid in the construction of teachers' homes in communities setting a minimum school year of eight months. Kent County, though at the time having a shorter school year for blacks than whites, apparently met these stipulations, though attendance was sparse at the beginning and end of the school year in Sharptown because of children's involvement with farm work and work on the water. In addition, migrant children rarely completed the entire school year.

Up until about 1920 sixty percent of the schools built were one- and two-teacher schools, with the Fund generally contributing up to one-third of the cost. For elementary schools the Fund contributions ranged from a minimum of \$200 for a one teacher elementary building to \$2600 for a six-teacher building. The money was turned over to local authorities only when the local amount provided or raised was sufficient to complete and equip the building totally, including desks and sanitary facilities.

When the school building program ended in 1932, 5,357 schools, shops and teachers homes in 883 counties of 15 southern states had been built at a total cost of \$28.5 million (4,977 schoolhouses, 217 teachers' homes, 163 shops). Local blacks had furnished \$4.7 million, local whites \$1.2 million, and state or county public funds had provided \$18.1 million. In Maryland 153 buildings (with a pupil capacity of 15,435) were constructed, at a total cost of \$889,658. For comparison, 633 were built in Mississippi, 813 in North Carolina, 4 in Missouri, 125 in Florida. The Fund cooperated with 15 state departments of education which were considered southern, but not Delaware since duPont funds supported a program there of building rural schools for blacks.

In many communities a Rosenwald School Day was observed annually to provide for upkeep of the schools. The intention was to re-arouse community interest in the schools, to encourage the cleaning and beautification of school buildings and grounds, and to raise money for repairs and equipment additions. The fund contributed small amounts to help pay for publicity materials for the day and for some of the materials used on that day. The surveyor was unable to ascertain whether such a day was observed in Sharptown. Long-time teacher at Sharptown, Mr. Phyllis Walley, did state, however, that the community did take great pride in the appearance of the school, planting trees and shrubs; their care also seemed to have been part of the teachers' responsibilities.



ROCK HALL QUADRANGLE

Contour revised by the Geological Survey 1900
Hydrography from USC&GS charts 548 and 549,
dated 1944

NATIONAL